

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application. Claims 2, 3 and 27-34 are currently being prosecuted. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider his rejections in view of the amendments and remarks as set forth below.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 2-4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by Efland et al. (U.S. Patent 5,468,984) or alternatively as being obvious under 35 U.S.C § 103 over Efland et al. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

The Examiner states that Efland et al. shows in Figures 16 and 17 a protection device having diodes with a doped area 213 in a first well 209, a deep well 201/203 under the first well 209 isolating the first well from the substrate. Alternatively, the claim is obvious because the functional language is not specifically recited by the reference. However, the ability of the device to function as described is inherent.

First, Applicants wish to point out the claim 2 has been rewritten in independent form to include the limitations of claim 1 from which it originally depended. Thus, claim 2 is unchanged but merely rewritten in independent form. Dependent claim 3 has also been retained. The remaining claims have been cancelled. However, new claims 27-34 have been added which roughly correspond to claims 5-11 and 13.

It is noted in the decision by the Board of Appeals dated June 11, 2007, the rejection of claims 2-4 was reversed. Concerning claim 5, the decision noted that there was an ambiguity regarding the first and second power lines which did not properly refer back to independent

claim 1. Accordingly, the Board refused to consider the limitation of the clamp circuit between the first and second power lines as part of claim 5. Accordingly, the rejection of claim 5 was maintained. Since claim 5, in the form of claim 27 has now been rewritten to properly refer to the two power lines, Applicants submit that this limitation should be considered and that this overcomes the previous rejection.

Similarly, claim 34 has been included which corresponds original claim 13. However, it has been written to indicate that the PN junction is formed with the recited elements. The Board previously considered the language of the claim to be broad enough to be interpreted as suggested by the Examiner. Applicants submit that with the new language, claim 13 is no longer broad enough to be interpreted in the manner suggested by the Examiner previously. Accordingly, this previous rejection is now overcome.

Concerning the rejection of claim 2, Applicants submit that the claim is neither anticipated by nor obvious over Efland et al. In particular, Applicants submit that the reference does not teach all of the features of the claimed invention and that the inclusion of these features would not be obvious.

It should be noted that claim 2 describes a second power line and a plurality of diodes, stacked and coupled between the first power line and the I/O pad. When an ESD event occurs between the second power line and the I/O pad, the diodes are forward-biased to conduct the ESD current. Applicants submit that Efland et al. does not teach that the diodes of Figure 16 or 17 are coupled between a first power line and an I/O pad as is claimed. There is nothing in Efland et al. to show that V_G of Figure 16 or 17 is an I/O pad. Further, claim 2 describes not only a diode structure but an ESD protection circuit with the diode structure and power lines having a

specific arrangement. Efland et al. at least fails to disclose the second power line. It also does not describe the limitation that the diodes must be forward-biased to discharge the ESD current when an ESD occurs between the second power line and the I/O pad. Thus, Applicants submit that Efland et al. does not anticipate claim 2. Further, there is no teaching as to why it would be obvious to one of the ordinary skill in the art to add such a second power line or to have the diodes be coupled between the first power line and the I/O pad. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claim 2 is not obvious over this reference either. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claim 2 is allowable. Claim 3 depends from claim 2 and as such is also considered to be allowable.

Claims 27-34 which correspond to original claims 5-11 and 13 have also been added. Applicants submit that these claims overcome the original rejections since Applicants have made changes which avoid the ambiguities pointed out by the Board of Appeals. Accordingly, Applicants submit that these claims are likewise allowable.

Conclusion

In view of the above remarks, it is believed that the claims clearly distinguish over the patent relied on by the Examiner. In view of this, reconsideration of the rejection and allowance of the claims are respectfully requested.

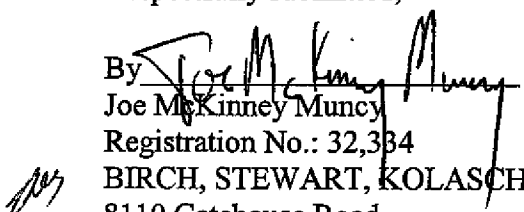
Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Robert F. Gnuse, Reg. No. 27,295 at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37.C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.14; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: November 29, 2007

Respectfully submitted,

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